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others of inferior sort, not possessed of lands or goods exceeding ten pounds ;” but announced that all others “who had not shewn their constant good affection to the Parliament of England,” should be banished, some to foreign parts, the rest should quit their estates and receive allotments for their support “wherever the Parliament of England, in order to the more effectual settlement of the peace of the nation, should think fit to appoint.”*

In accordance with this announcement there issued from the commissioners of the parliament for the government of Ireland, on the 14th October, 1653, an order that all who were not included in the parliament’s mercy, should, themselves and their families, transplant beyond the Shannon before the 1st May following, under penalty of being shot to death by martial law if found after that date, without a pass, in any of the other three provinces.†

In the meantime, their estates were surveyed and Down-admeasured by Dr. Petty, for the satisfying the arrears of pay due to the soldiery. But so complete was the desolation of Tipperary, consequent on the transplantation, that none of the inhabitants that knew the bounds of the old estates, remained to accompany the surveyors ; and the government were obliged to order the temporary return of five or six families from Connaught, acquainted with the country, to show the bounds of the forfeited estates.‡ This survey was completed in the year 1654, and in that and the following year, the several regiments whose lots fell in the North Riding of Tipperary, were there set down, and thus was effected, though by different means than those employed by lord Strafford, the projected plantation of Ormond.

ON AN ANCIENT MONUMENTAL SLAB AT ATHLONE.

BY T. L. COOKE, ESQ.

[*Read at the Meeting of May 7th.*]

It is now more than six years since I had occasion to visit the celebrated town of Athlone. Having had a spare hour while there, I rambled to the ruins of the monastery which once belonged to the order of Conventual Franciscans. These remains stand, dressed in the venerable grandeur of antiquity, on the north-east side of the town. The religious house there mouldering in decay, was founded by Cathal Croibh-dhearg O’Conor, who did not live to complete the building,

* Scobell’s *Acts and Ordinances of the Parliament of England*.

† *Printed Proclamation*.—Kilkenny Castle.

‡ *Privy Council Book*, A. 5.

and it was finished in the year 1241 by Sir Henry Dillon, whose final resting place its consecrated ground became in three years afterwards.

While I strayed amidst the relics of other days in search of any vestiges of antiquity on which I might light, my wandering steps led me unconsciously amongst the many grass-clad mounds and more formal tomb-stones, the memorials of people long departed, which environed the crumbling walls. Nor was my trouble unrequited, for here I happened to meet with a grave-stone of very high antiquity. It had, as far as I can learn, passed until then unheeded in modern times. It lay there prostrate and neglected, level with the surface of the ground, a few yards to the south-east of the dilapidated entrance to the body of the church. This remain of other days is a plain and unassuming slab of freestone, about three feet long by a foot and a-half, or twenty inches wide at the broadest part; but it is somewhat wider at one end than at the other.

There is a cross engraved on it in narrow outline, as represented in the drawing which accompanies this paper.*

On the upper and left hand corner of the stone, the word **OR** is engraved in the Irish character, and the word **DO** occupies a similar position on the upper right hand corner. It is worthy of remark that the two letters comprising each of the words just mentioned, are united or run into each other, so as to form a sort of monogram. The **O**, in the word **DO**, is much larger than the **D**. This obviously was done intentionally, with a view to give the words **OR** and **DO** a similarity of appearance. The two words are inclined so as to appear upright when inspected from the direction of the point where the shaft and arms of the cross intersect each other. The remainder of the inscription, consisting merely of the name **ṬHORPΔΙṬH**, is engraved parallel to the shaft of the cross, the syllable **ṬHOR** being on one side of it, and **ΔΙṬH** on the other. It is probably superfluous for me to add that the complete inscription, **OR DO ṬHORPΔΙṬH**, signifies "a prayer for Thorpaid." Such is the simple, quaint and almost obscure, yet modest manner in which the monumental inscriptions met with in Ireland, of an æra prior to A.D. 1100, are generally found. They never give a date, and they sometimes merely record the name of the deceased. Nevertheless, they generally have (as in the instance before us) the pious words **OR DO**, or **OROṬ DO**, viz.—"pray," or "a prayer for," prefixed to the name of the person commemorated.

The name Thorpaith (in Latin Torpadius) has been diversely written Thorpaith, Torpaith, Tairpaithe, Torbath, and Tordath. It is

* Mr. Cooke's drawing represents a slab inscribed with a Latin cross, the arms of which are connected by a circle. The word **OR** occurs on the upper right hand angle of the stone, and **DO** at the corresponding left hand angle. The name **ṬHORPΔΙṬH** is divided, **ṬHOR** is cut parallel to the shaft of the cross at the left side, and **ΔΙṬH** in a similar manner at the right side. The cross is much plainer and more angular in its character than is usually the case on ancient Irish tomb-stones.—**EDS.**

pronounced as if spelled *Torpa*, or *Thoarpa*, according to the English sound of the letters. This word is still preserved in the family name O'Torpy, or Torpy, which is common in several parts of Ireland.

With a view to ascertaining the age of this sepulchral slab, we must, in addition to the aid to be derived from the shape of the letters used in the inscription, seek for the time in which the deceased lived. In the prosecution of such research we discover that a person named Torpadius, in Irish **ṬHORPAICTH**, was a scribe in the monastery of Tallaght, County of Dublin, and that he died, as Dr. Lanigan (*Eccl. Hist.* vol. iii. p. 329) informs us, A.D. 873. The name of this Torpadius is mentioned along with that of Aidus, a scribe in Roscommon—a circumstance which, coupled with the knowledge of the roving kind of life pursued by the writers of that time, would make it no matter of surprise that Torpadius of Tallaght should die at Athlone and be interred there.

The monumental stone I have described may, notwithstanding what has just been written, be more probably taken for that of Torpath of Brehmuine, father of Blathmac, who was abbot of Clonmacnoise, and died A.D. 896, according to the *Chronicon Scotorum*. The entry in the *Chronicle* in reference to this Blathmac runs as follows:—

“A.D. 896.—**Blathmac**, **ṛṇṇceṛṇ Cluana mac Noṣṣ, .i. mac Ṭaṛṇcedaict do Bṛeḡmaṛṇib, d'ec.**”

“A.D. 896.—Blathmac, chief (i.e. abbot) of Clonmacnoise, i.e. the son of Taircedach of Brawney, died.”

Colgan fixes Blathmac's death in 891, being five years earlier. The difference of a few years between the times thus given is a matter of no great importance on a subject of such high antiquity. It is to be remarked that Brehmuine, which we have just seen that Thorpaith, the father of Blathmac, is described as being from, is the old name of a district in the County of Westmeath, and now known as the barony of Brawney, in which the ruins of the Conventual Franciscan monastery of Athlone stand. The funeral stone of Blathmac, son of Torpath of Brehmuine, is still extant at Clonmacnoise, and is worthy of notice as having represented on it emblems borrowed from the Pagans.

The *Annals of Tighernach* inform us that a person named Torbaid, was *comarban* of St. Patrick, previous to the year 758, when his son Gorman died on a pilgrimage at the well of St. Fineen at Clonmacnoise. There was formerly a causeway leading through the bog from Clonmacnoise to Athlone, which must have facilitated the intercourse between these places. It is therefore possible that it is the Torbaid last mentioned who was interred at Athlone. My conviction however is, that the stone I have described was carved in memory of Torpath, the father of Blathmac. He is described as Thorpath of Brehmuine, the very district in which the sepulchral slab has been found. I may add, in confirmation of my own opinion, that my excellent friend, that able antiquary and delightful artist, Dr. Petrie, is, or was, when I had a communication from him in August, 1849, respecting this stone, of

a similar way of thinking with me with regard to the person it was designed to commemorate.

The Franciscan monastery of Cathal O'Connor, at Athlone, not having been founded until A.D. 1241, it seems to follow from the evidence borne by the Thorpath monument, that the site of the monastery must have been used for sepulture, if not for religious purposes also, before that house was founded by Cathal. As the ruin is upon the bank of the Shannon and close to that river, it might have been from the worship of the moon at this place in Pagan times that Athlone derives its name, which is supposed to be from *ath*, a ford, and *luan*, the moon. I have in my collection one of those bronze antiques, representing the sun (or a disk) connected with the moon (or a crescent) by a crooked stem, around which are coiled two pointed wires representing serpents. It was found in the Shannon, close to the monastery at Athlone, a couple of years ago, by the workmen engaged in constructing quays there. Vallancey supposed that these bronze instruments were used for musical purposes. But he was greatly mistaken in that conjecture. I have a small one of them, which was found in the King's County, and which I believe to be unique. It has in enamel on it various devices, amongst which is the arrow-head, emblematic of the sun, and the sacred tree as a dualistic symbol. I suppose these articles to have been used in religious ceremonies. The small one, which I have just now vaguely described, appears as if it had been worn merely as a badge, for one side of it is quite rough while the other was highly finished and ornamented. If we suppose the sight of the Franciscan convent to have been used for religious worship and sepulture in Pagan times, that theory would account for the same place being adopted by Christian clergy, and also for its continuing to be a place of interment previous to the erection of Cathal O'Connor's monastery there. If the funeral stone, which is the subject of this paper, be taken to be that of the father of Blathmac, and it shall be admitted to have been carved soon after his decease, it is a piece of Christian sculpture of the great age of about 960 years. How many a day and night have gone past since Thorpath died! How many generations of men have in that interval passed away!

It is right I should state, while sending this paper to the Kilkenny Archæological Society, that I have been informed that colonel H. Jones, of the Royal Engineers, some time ago sent a trace of the Thorpath stone to the Royal Irish Academy. I cannot say whether he made any communication as to the individual it was intended to keep in memory. Neither do I know whether he claimed the discovery of the stone as his own. He of course might have met with it independently of its discovery by me. In justice to myself I may, however, state that, previous to the gallant colonel's communication, I had, by a letter signed with my initials, dated the 22nd April, 1845, and published in the *Athlone Sentinel*, drawn the attention of the antiquarian world to the fact of this curious monumental relic being then in existence.

CORRIGENDA.

- p. 290, line 32, for "See Fionn," read "See Finn," and for "*Suidhe Fionn*," read "*Suidhe Finn*".
- p. 291, line 17, after "wide," dele " , ,".
- p. 292, line 18, for "covering stone," read "covering-stone".
- Ib. line 41, after "Gaul," insert " , ,".
- p. 293, line 4, for "Suidhe Fionn," read "Suidhe Finn," and for "*Suidhe Fionn*," read "*Suidhe Finn*".
- p. 322, line 3, from bottom, for "Argatros," read "Argetros".
- p. 323, line 9, for "Acadamy," read "Academy".
- p. 324, line 3, for "Fratertach," read "Flahertach".
- p. 387, line 14, for "centre," read "cavern".
- p. 400, line 28, after "what" insert "we".
- Ib. line 40, after "survey," insert " , ,".
- p. 407, line 38, *note*, after "custody," dele ") ".
- p. 410, line 4, from bottom, *note*, for "ΤΗΟΚΡΑΤΗ," read "ΤΗΟΚΡΑΤΗ".
- p. 412, line 25, for "sight," read "site".
- p. 413, line 3, for "HORE," read "HOARE".
- p. 433, line 28, for "for," read "but".
- p. 442, line 2, for "RSQ.," read "ESQ".
- p. 446, line 15, after "lordship," dele " , ,".
- p. 483, line 13, for "earls of Saxon," read "Saxon earls".
- p. 492, line 3, from bottom, after "*Kilkenny*," insert ") ".